
CHAPTER 14

On the Water

THE WATERFRONT was a busy place and safety rules were paramount. The waterfront head supervised all the activities there and was responsible for the work carried on by the head of swimming and her seven assistants, the head of canoeing and her three assistants, and the head of sailing and her two. She shifted her counsellors to other places on the waterfront as the need arose.

Swimming

Individual instruction was the rule on the swimming dock. Each instructor was assigned to one of the six swimming areas and while these assignments remained fairly constant, they sometimes varied from period to period and from day to day according to the needs. It was important for counsellors to be flexible in this respect and to put the needs of the group ahead of her special skill.

Each counsellor was an expert in some phase of swimming or diving. Each was familiar with the standards required for the different coloured caps. These caps gave the campers a goal to strive for and helped them persevere and overcome any fears or difficulties they might have in the water. The caps served also as a safety device, since

the bright colours were easily spotted from the dock. They began with a red cap for non-swimmers, who were our greatest challenge. They were given special instruction by a counsellor reserved especially for their needs. The yellow cap allowed campers to move into the deep end of the pool, where they could work for the blue cap which admitted them to the deep water on the lake side of the dock. There they worked their way up through black and white caps to the green cap. The green cap was an award given for skill in diving, speed and synchronized swimming, but also for the camper's attitude and helpfulness.

It was rarely that a camper went home at the end of four weeks without learning to swim. But I recall one child who nothing would induce to put her head under water. In talking to her mother afterwards we discovered the reason: she had warned the child who was subject to colds not to get her hair wet!

It was heart-warming to note the enthusiasm of the whole camp when one who had been struggling for a special objective in swimming, canoeing or sailing eventually achieved her goal. Then you would hear the strains of the old song in the dining-room, sung to the tune of "A Bicycle Built For Two":

Mary Jane what have you done today
Swimming, canoeing or sailing across the bay.
You've shown us that you're an expert
We think that you are "swell"
You've worked and worked for your blue cap
And you've certainly done it well.

Many of the swimming counsellors were Red Cross instructors, and the Red Cross tests were incorporated into our own. The test for the yellow cap, for instance, was equivalent to that of the Junior Red Cross. The tests for the blue cap and the distance swim for the black, were

equivalent to those of the intermediate Red Cross. The white cap test was equivalent to that of the Senior Red Cross. Candidates were tested by qualified examiners.

The last ten minutes of each period, morning and afternoon, were devoted to play. Water polo, follow-the-leader and other such games were of great value in developing the campers' sense of freedom in the water.

The special events, which varied from year to year, gave added interest to the programme.

We found the following most successful: swimming meets for the camp; swimming meets for the tribe; demonstration of water safety; ornamental demonstration by counsellors; a routine by the campers; a demonstration of advanced ornamental by campers and counsellors; and water ballets.

Sailing

Each period, from the sailing dock, our five fourteen-foot Ackroyd dinghys set sail, manned by eager campers. The lake was gusty at times, but the boats were rarely out of sight of the dock, except in the east end of the lake, when counsellors were along. Sailing races were held as often as the wind permitted, and the Royal Canadian Yacht Club rules were followed.

The practice of capsizing on purpose was banned at Tanamakoon. It was a controversial question: "Does the camper gain a great deal of necessary experience by dumping or does the danger outweigh the value of the experience, especially when there are campers of varying degrees of swimming ability in the boat?" Of course boats did dump on occasions, then the dumping was made a topic of discussion. It clarified for those concerned exactly what had happened, and brought to light what was done and what should have been done. After such discussion the campers involved went out again as soon as possible to regain confidence.

The different stages of achievement in sailing were denoted by becoming a crew member, a mate, a sailor, or perhaps winning the award of that coveted rank, a skipper. Skipper was given to the all-round camper who had had considerable experience in sailing and racing and who was adjudged by the waterfront staff to be absolutely trustworthy in a sailboat.

The sailboats were named after people. The first was the *Merrigee*, named after the director. Each of the others was named after a counsellor whom the campers wished to honour.

There was the *Louise* named after Louise Burns, the *Jaward* after Dorothy Jackson, and Elizabeth Wardley, the *Margaret* after Margaret Dunning, the *Conquest* after Mary Conquest Harris, and finally the *May* for George.

The *Merrigee* served us for twenty-three years, and when she came to the end of her usefulness we did not like to see her lying around doing nothing, so decided to bury her at sea.

She was burned like the Viking ships of old, with due ceremony; there was not a dry eye in the place. Next day fragments of her found floating around in the lake were picked up, safely stowed away in trunks, and taken home. Somehow we had not failed in one respect at least: the campers had learned to love a sailboat just as they did a horse or a canoe.

One of the most eagerly anticipated events of the season was the sailing race with the Northway Lodge Campers. Northway, as before mentioned, was the camp for American girls on Cache Lake. They were our "good neighbours" in every sense of the word, and it had been our custom for many years to have sailing races at Northway or Tanamakoon in alternate years. The main idea was to foster friendship between the two camps.

Usually three boats from each camp were entered. If the races were at Tanamakoon, the Northway boats were

brought over the previous day, and on the morning of the races the sailors came over and tried out the course. They had noon dinner with us, and the rest of the camp paddled over in time for the races. After the event was over a buffet supper was served; then all gathered around a campfire for a sing-song before we waved them off down the channel toward home. The favourite sailing song was sung to the tune of "The Road to Mandalay". It went like this:

When the wind sings from the pine trees,
When the wind sings from the sea,
When the wind runs shouting wildly,
Or the wind laughs quietly,
Oh, then we go to meet it,
My slender sail and I,
Swift we loose our pinioned wings
As we hear the wind go by!
Oh! Sailor, loose the sheet,
And let the wind blow free,
The sea is mine and I must sail
When a wind's in the heart of me:
Oh! tack, then go about,
But keep the white sail high,
Singing ho! for gallant comrades,
My sailboat, wind, and I.

Canoeing

Further along the waterfront, in the bay, canoes circled, practising landings, or went out with a counsellor to improve strokes, while a few stalwarts headed down the lake on an "endurance" paddle.

The whole camp concentrated on canoeing for the first week, in order to get everyone out on the water and through the necessary water safety tests before going on canoe trips. The first test was The Trip; the next The Stern; then The Solo. The Expert was awarded to those campers who had become skilled in most of the strokes.

The main basis for the award was the assurance that the camper felt completely at home in a canoe.

The Tanamakoon Tripper was one of the two tangible awards given at the end of the season to an outstanding camper who had her Expert, was a first class tripper, and had made a contribution to the activities of waterfront.

The trophy was a miniature bronze paddle about eighteen inches in length. It was donated by Nancy Fairley, a camper and counsellor of long standing, who had contributed in many ways, tangible and intangible, to the life of the camp. The recipient's name was engraved on the blade, and she held the emblem in her possession for one year.

Some of the special events on the canoeing programme were: exhibitions by campers of the strokes in the tests; Waterfront Day with the swimming department; regattas for individual tribes; expeditions for whole mornings or afternoons down the Madawaska and around Cache Lake, about seven miles in all. These expeditions afforded valuable experience and proved a much-enjoyed outing. The love of campers for canoes and dinghys was proven every evening. After tea the campers would race down to the dock for a sail if there was wind, or a quiet paddle if it was still, before the evening programme. Interest in both swimming and canoeing was attested also at four-thirty in the afternoon, when several times a week classes were provided for those wishing to work on diving and synchronized swimming, while the canoeists were trying out racing techniques or gunwale bobbing.

One of the special canoeing events in the earlier years was the parade of twenty-four or more canoes. This usually took place in the early evening, occasionally after dark with a lighted lantern in the bow and stern of each canoe. It was a fairyland scene as the canoes moved about in intricate patterns, the blue-black waters reflecting the dancing lights.

CHAPTER 15

On the Land

Campcraft

FUN was not confined to the waterfront. Campcraft offered an exciting challenge, giving the camper ample opportunity for experiencing life in the open. Here she acquired the necessary skills and learned to feel at home in the woods. This was the best possible preparation for canoe trips.

Four counsellors on the staff were assigned to the different phases of this activity: the cook-outs; the ranging and exploration trips; the camp and tribal projects; and the special programmes for the Ojibways.

The counsellors changed places with one another from time to time, but each was responsible for one of these activities. The nature study and sketching counsellors were closely associated with this group in the planning, as were the tripping and canoe heads.

The campcraft programme was very flexible, and differed from year to year depending on the need of the group, the leadership available and the projects on hand. The campcraft for the younger campers was scheduled, but for the rest of the campers it centred around cook-outs, all-day and overnight trips, and special projects. Learning is most effective when it answers a real need. This was

apparent when the campers started off in small groups, equipped with individual reflector ovens, food and pangs of hunger. It did not take them long to discover that it was fun to cook their own meals, and campcraft took on a new meaning.

The campcraft cook-outs were at noon. Sometimes they were associated with some such project as repairing or building a campsite, and incidentally the participants would learn skills like chopping and the use of tools. At other times a campcraft cook-out might be purely for the purpose of learning campfire cooking. This would involve the building of fires, choosing the right wood, and learning how to cook dishes which were appreciated on canoe trips. And most important of all was learning to take the necessary precautions in putting the fire out.

The cook-outs for the evening meal were for an entirely different purpose. They were of a purely social nature, when cabin groups and counsellors went off for the pure joy of cooking a meal around a camp fire. The cabin cook-outs were scheduled, until everyone had been out once, after that they were held as requested by the cabin counsellors. There was a limit to the number that could be sent out at one time, but the aim was to have twenty-five per cent of the camp out each day, including those on a canoe trip.

The all-day ranging trips have already been described in Part II. On these trips the counsellor had to watch her own enthusiastic efforts to get the job completed, she had to make sure the building of a shelter or runway was meeting the needs of the camper rather than the camper serving the demands of the project.

Exploration trips were taken to some lake or place of interest in the vicinity, the group often finding their way by use of map and compass.

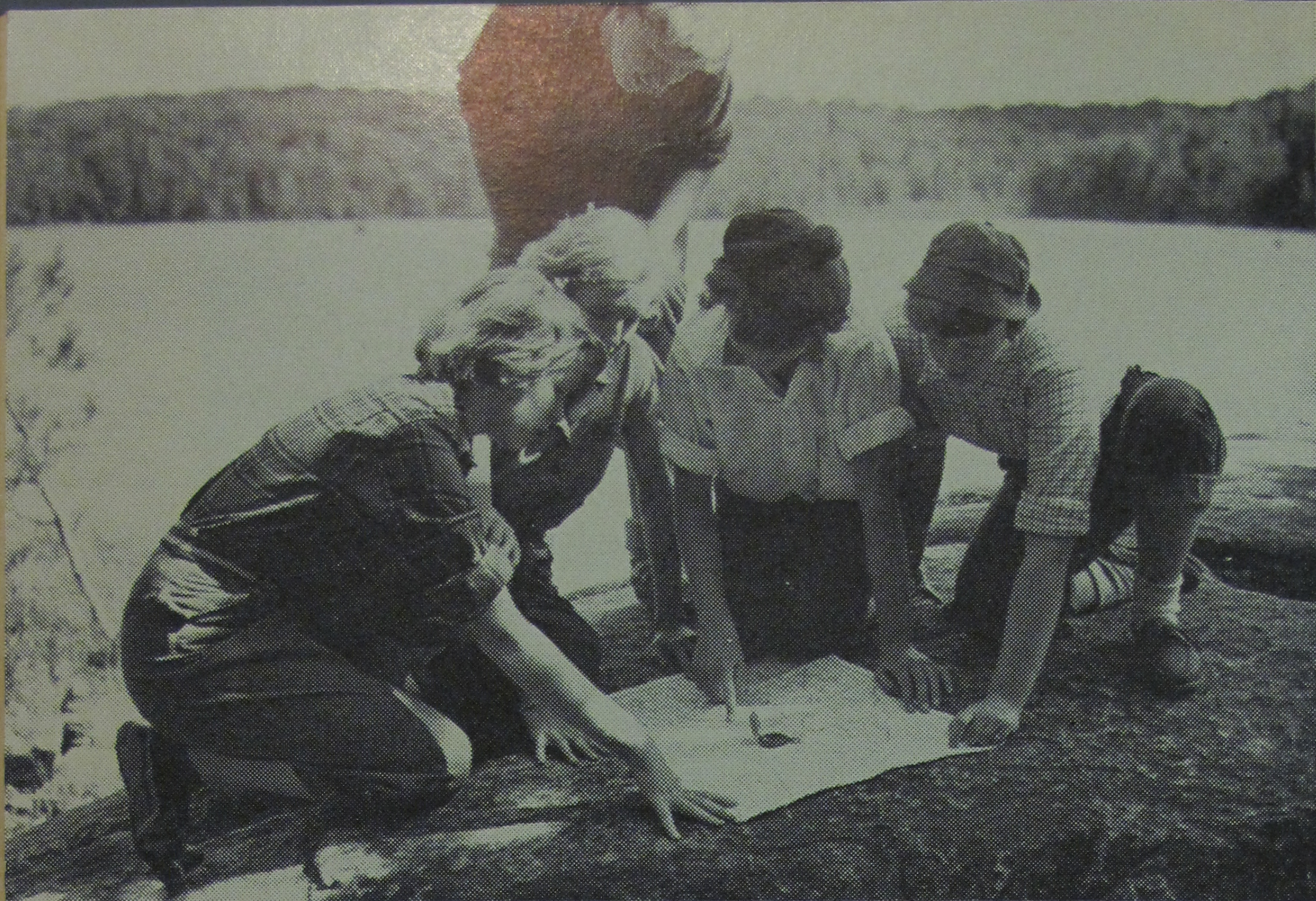
The special projects might be all-camp projects or tribal projects. It was important that each camper be given the



Off for a canter

*Amos, Cairn, Dolly, Dan and Diamond
They like the water too*





By map and compass



Pitching a pup-tent



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